

O C U L U S

NEW YORK CHAPTER

115 EAST 40TH STREET, NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

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FEBRUARY 1958

ANNIVERSARY DINNER DANCE

On Friday, February 28th all chapter members, their wives and guests are invited to join in the Anniversary Dinner Dance, again to be held in The Metropolitan Club at 1 East 60th Street. There will be uninterrupted opportunity for dancing and fraternizing with one's friends from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. There will be no presentations, speeches or awards. Lester Lanins' Orchestra will establish the background mood. Mark your calendar now and watch your mail for further details and reservation notice.

HOSPITAL AND HEALTH FIELD TRIP

The third in the current series of field trips will be a tour of a new type of health facility, the trade union sponsored Health Center. One of the most novel in design is the Amalgamated Laundry Workers Health Center at 222 East 34th Street of which Lee Schoen of this Chapter was the architect. On Saturday, March 1st, at 10:00 a.m. sharp, we shall tour this center under the guidance of Mr. Schoen and representatives of the administrative staff.

CHAPTER LUNCHEON MEETING

On Thursday, January 23, the New York Chapter held a regular meeting for the purpose of nominating a Nominations Committee in accordance with the Chapter By-Laws. Also at this luncheon Robert W. Cutler, President, discussed the inter-relationship of the various chapters with the Institute, the Regional Council, the New York State Association of Architects, the NY and Brooklyn Societies and the Architects Council of New York City. This latter organization was founded in 1950 and deals primarily with City and State legislative matters. There is presently under consideration by the NY Chapter the establishment of the Architects Council as an autonomous committee directly related to the NY State Association. This recommendation is to be discussed at the next N.Y.S.A.A. meeting in March.

NEW YORK CHAPTER MEMBERS HONORED

A new Board of Standards and Appeals was recently sworn in by Mayor Wagner. Re-organized by the enactment of a local law recommended last January 20th, the Board consists of 5 members appointed for 5 year terms. The new board members are Max H. Foley F.A.I.A. Mechanical Engineer and Harold R. Sleeper F.A.I.A. Architect and past president of both the New York Chapter and the Architectural League of New York. Among those re-appointed was chairman Harold H. Murdock F.A.I.A. Mr. Murdock was originally appointed to the Board of Standards and Appeals in 1932 and has been re-appointed at 6 year intervals since then. The new Board will concern itself solely with quasi-judicial functions and will continue to exercise its legislative functions of rule making.

COMING EVENTS

February 28, Friday

New York Chapter's Anniversary Dance. Metropolitan Club

March 1. Saturday

Hospital & Health Committee field trip. Amalgamated Laundry Workers Health Center

Ed. Note: With this issue of the Oculus, your Publication Committee introduces a new format and new printing process. It is our intention that the two column page will provide for improved readability and greater flexibility in layout. The new letter press printing process has the added feature of achieving more material in less space with a large selection of variable type settings. These changes are introduced in the interest of better serving the chapter membership with a more enlightening and presentable publication. Your comments are invited.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Three cocktails-buffet supper parties for prospective members of the A.I.A. have been scheduled for February 11, March 11, and April 16. These get-togethers are being sponsored by your Membership Committee. NY Chapter member firms are being invited to recommend associates and employees of their respective organizations for participation in the program. The guests will be informed of the principles of the A.I.A. and of its activities.

At the February 11th get-together the candidates will, in addition, hear an informal talk by Paul D. Nelson. Those firms participating in the first scheduled program include: La Pierre, Litchfield and Partners; McKim, Mead and White; Moore & Hutchins; O'Connor & Kilham; Rogers & Butler; Urbahn, Brayton and Burrows; and York & Sawyer.

ARCHITECTS AND HISTORIANS JOIN FORCES

The "Committee to Preserve the National Capitol" has launched a campaign to prevent the rebuilding of the East Front of the Capitol. Congress has recently appropriated \$17,000,000 for this work on the grounds it would improve the architecture. The newly established Committee argues that the moving of the East Front would injure the appearance of the Capitol instead of improving it. This Committee is supported by both the American Institute of Architects and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Its members include Architects Lorimer Rich and Ralph Walker of the New York Chapter.

Lorimer Rich speaking for the Committee reports that "the East Front of the Capitol is historic. It represents the early efforts of the great among our Architects. It represents the critical judgment of our early leaders. It has pleased the American people for one hundred and sixty-five years. The first architectural structure of this country as an independent nation. It is a milestone in our history. We believe the American people cherish it and wish it to be preserved.

It will remain unchanged only if interested citizens write their protests to their Senators, their Representatives and to Mr. Pat McNamara and to Mr. Robert Jones, chairmen respectively of the Senate and House subcommittee on Public Works."

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TERMINATES MEMBERSHIP

The Associate membership of Daniel Chait and Edward W. Slater has been terminated by action of the Executive Committee of the New York Chapter. Messrs. Chait and Slater have been practicing architecture as principals for more than three years and have taken no action to apply for Corporate membership under the terms of Article 3, Section 3 of the Chapter By-Laws. Repeated correspondence from the Chapter Office has elicited no reply from them.

ARCHITECTURAL EXHIBITIONS

The buildings of the Spanish Architect Antoni Gaudi (1852-1926) are on exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, through February 23rd. Mr. Gaudi's work is unique in its surrealist and sculptural qualities and is related in style to the curvilinear art nouveau of the turn of the century.

TV PUBLICITY

A contribution to the public relations of Architects was made by New York Chapter member William Corbett on the afternoon of January 10 through a televised program carried over station WATV, Channel 13. Mr. Corbett of the Newark firm of Bauer and Corbett discussed "The Role of Architecture in the New Newark" with Robert C. Hoover, Planning officer for the City of Newark. During the course of the discussion, Mr. Corbett expressed the opinion that in the new Newark of taller, more efficient buildings with more open spaces and parks—the job of the architect is to contribute as much as possible to the economic growth of the city through good architecture.

INFORMATION REQUESTED ON REMODELING PROJECTS

Have you recently done an unusual remodeling job on a commercial or office building? A major newspaper is interested in doing one or more stories on how an architect or firm carried out a project while business went on as usual, or in an extraordinarily short time, or under some circumstance that required special ingenuity. Perhaps an existing part of the structure was used, when the owner thought it would have to be removed. Perhaps the job inspired others on the street to do similar work. If you have recently done a project of this type or have one under way, please get in touch with Al Frantz, at the Chapter's public relations counsel Edward Gottlieb & Associates Ltd., 640 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y. (Telephone: Judson 2-7540)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Going to the Brussels Fair? In the American Pavilion there will be an exhibit called UNFINISHED BUSINESS. It will be divided into three parts: Chaos, Crystallization, Serenity. Their cumulative purpose will be to admit we have unsolved social problems in the United States, and to indicate our plans and hopes for the future. But if you think about the provocative subject right here in New York, it offers a mental springboard for a plunge into the troubled waters of architecture.

The term UNFINISHED BUSINESS is both personal and disturbing. For one thing, our own tatters of personal unfinished business have just been inherited by the new year from the old. How do we set in motion propitious progress from chaos to crystallization, and thence to blissful serenity? On a broader base, the term UNFINISHED BUSINESS seems especially applicable to our profession. What is more descriptive than "chaos" for one's mental state when beginning a new commission, or "crystallization" for the collation of a client's complicated requirements, and "serenity" for the final completion of the structure? But is any current building truly finished? Can we ever hope to enjoy the serene satisfaction of FINISHED BUSINESS?

Others do. There is the manufacturer who produces a definitive item, which the purchaser expects to be serviceable for only a limited period of time; once paid for, the transaction is completed. Lucky man. Fortunate too are members of some professions. The lawyer wins (or loses) a case, and after his fee has been paid, he can file the case under finished business (albeit his client languishes behind bars). Or, take the doctor whose immaculate assistant deposits his fee for setting a bone. But not us.

Supposing some famous ancient and renaissance architects were reincarnated, registered and compelled to practice in the here-and-now. They would likely fulminate over the compulsory complications of mechanical equipment and the building code straight-jackets which would force them into exterior and interior compromises, even as you and I. Some might grieve over the realization that their structures would not make them immortal, no matter how above reproach were the design, because their current buildings would be but transitional shells, not one of them long devoted to the precise purposes for which they were planned. Can't you hear several complain that prior to the first quarter of this century, monuments and monumental buildings filled their original roles for indefinite periods of time, whereas now a decade is considered a long-term usage? Another might opine that even some other types of buildings grew obsolete so gradually, and were so protected by revered tradition, that they escaped radical remodeling or demolition.

Some of the most admired buildings of Europe were several centuries in building. On the other hand, some of our most useful and admired structures in New York have not outlived their authors. This may indicate a definite trend. There is reason to fear that all future architectural "solutions" will be merely make-shifts, regardless of how valid the program seemed at the time of its acceptance. As the increase in population and congestion accelerates, "solutions" for slum clearance, zoning, traffic, and all their interrelated complications, will be overlaid by new problems before the old ones can be solved. Seems like Johnny will always need new and longer pants before the tailor can complete the ones he was fitted for last week.

It is a shopworn expression in aviation design that an airplane is obsolete by the time its working drawings are complete. Maybe as architects we should proclaim the same truth about our finalized products. Are we not accurate in describing *all* our completed structures as UNFINISHED BUSINESS? In this frank admission, do we not express our awareness of a continuing responsibility, not only to the client(s) for whom the building is constructed, but to the clients who inherit its future out-of-dateness, and to the architects of the future who will struggle to remodel it? As the need for changes in all types of buildings accelerates, the architect may rightly consider himself a specialist in anticipating remodeling. His commissions will run the gamut from the large-area problems, as "remodeling" outmoded portions of cities or industrial complexes, to small-area problems, as those dealing with individual buildings. In the future there may not always be the abundance (as at present) of funds or natural resources, available to tear down twenty-story buildings, and replace them with new ones. Certainly it would be more desirable if increased study and foresight enabled us to build efficient "envelopes", which would require changing only partitions and perhaps fenestration, when new requirements of occupancy demanded a new solution.

What are the most urgent problem-areas of our profession's UNFINISHED BUSINESS? As specialists in remodeling the present to suit the future, how can we be prescient concerning social changes, so that there will be a low obsolescence coefficient built into our finished products? Better still, how can we anticipate the needs of the future before existing conditions become critical? In our own bailiwick obviously one prime problem area is a solution for blighted urban areas which would be both imaginative and practical, and one which eliminates some of the causes for juvenile delinquency. Another is to aid in evaluating the function, utility, and routing of private motor cars so that gradually these machines become

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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secondary to people, and finally to such a degree that city dwellers are permitted to live fairly normal lives (especially the very young should be entitled to play safely out of doors). For most of us the problem area will be limited to a single building at a time, and in so planning each structure, that in the future it will lend itself to being enlarged either (or both) horizontally or vertically, and will permit its function to encompass a series of diverse uses.

What is the architect's responsibility to the future? Need he accept the challenge of considering every building a piece of unfinished business? Fortunately he has always been a sturdy optimist, and not averse to rendering service above and beyond the call of professional duty. Moreover, every architect has always been cognizant that the best part of his fees was the satisfaction in improving the environment in which his fellows live and work. So maybe it is not unreasonable to hope that there has been the proper conditioning for a profession which is now faced with the premise that it cannot often derive satisfaction from finding a solution which will long be able to meet escalator demands. The architect may in many types of buildings from now on have to be content with the non-glamorous role of performing the duties of a temporary custodian of utilizing to the best of his abilities, a plot of land, a building budget, and a building usage which may zig and zag in a disorderly manner.

Need our consciences be plagued with the challenge that the architect should try to do more than merely fulfill the expressed desires of his client? Ignore it? Evade it? Weep in our beer and ask the bartender if it isn't enough to try to do a decent job to satisfy current needs, without trying to peer over the horizon? True, we can't do anything about urban growth—slow it down, control it, predict either its direction or rate of growth. But in studying varying future possibilities for any scheme, the mental discipline of so doing creates an awareness for the need to arrive at a flexible solution. If any flexibility rubs off on the working drawings, it has been effort well spent. And not to be entirely disregarded, is the likelihood that the observant client will not be unappreciative of the architect who endeavors to minimize the problems of keeping up to date with the unknown demands of the future.

Is flexibility our lodestar, from the basic parti to the final working drawings? What criteria should we have for "flexibility", because what would be ample for one type of structure, might be inadequate for another type which was serving an embryonic development (as in certain industrial laboratories or manufacturing processes). In

schools, office buildings, or public buildings, should most interior partitions be as readily movable as in some museums which can change them for each new exhibition? Can the heating, wiring and plumbing lines all be so located along outside walls, with tributaries running inland, in such a way that there may be adequate services for several sequences of change-of-building purpose? Will the recently expressed national need for training more engineers and scientists mean that some new schools, which are barely completed, will be required to install new electric and plumbing lines for new laboratories? Will the changing methods of teaching continue to accelerate? If so, will plans which seem adequate and flexible now, actually become disappointingly resistant to future concepts?

What about houses? It is a problem which is ever with us. Unfortunately the solution of how the profession tries to improve the vast number of unbuilt houses, will probably be one of the last pieces of Unfinished Business to be considered, because it is everybody's and yet nobody's professional business. In most parts of the country, as in most of our suburbs, the more houses, the more ugliness. Of course we can't afford to do them for nothing, or to do small ones at all for any fee (so we tell each other). But as a profession, can we really afford only to practice like surgeons, in a carriage-trade hospital, or should we consider giving up a certain portion of our time to non-paying, clinic patients?

(The preceding article was written by Gerald K. Geerlings of the Publications Committee. It is the first of a two part series. Next month Peter S. Van Bloem will explore the Future Business of our profession. Regarding this article on "Unfinished Business", Mr. Geerlings reports that he is expressing his own claim to congenital insanity, that it does not represent the sanity of the other members of the Publication Committee and further that the entire Chapter should "wash its hands of any responsibility." We wonder.)

Le BRUN FELLOWSHIP PRIZE COMPETITIONS

A prize of \$3,000 is given biennially for 6 months travel outside the United States under a fellowship competition established by the will of the late Napoleon Eugene Le Brun, architect of the Metropolitan Life Building. This year's competition open to architects from 23 years of age through 30, calls for the design of a Commemorative Exhibition Building with its environs in a city of about 100,000 population. Programs will be available February 14. The solution must be returned to the Committee not later than April 1st. Further information may be obtained from the Le Brun Fellowship Committee, New York Chapter, A.I.A. 115 East 40 Street.

The 1958 committee for the award consists of Arthur C. Holden, chairman, Arthur S. Douglass, Leopold Armand, Theodore Hood, Daniel Schwartzman, and Lester D. Tichy, all members of the New York Chapter.

THE 1958 BRUNNER SCHOLARSHIP

Pursuant to the will of the late Emma B. Brunner, the Architectural League of New York in 1941 created the ARNOLD W. BRUNNER SCHOLARSHIP for the general purpose of "promoting and encouraging accomplishment in the arts and professions represented in the membership of the Architectural League and render them of greater use to the community."

Any citizen of the United States is eligible upon submission in clear outline form of some project or study bearing on the field of architecture or related arts. Application blanks are now available from the League and must be returned not later than February 15. Within a maximum limit of \$2,500, a cash award, suitable to the project proposed, will be paid to the applicant or applicants making the winning submissions.

STUDENT COMPETITION

The Division of Housing, through the National Institute for Architectural Education, is sponsoring architectural student competitions on a nationwide basis, aimed at discovering new economies in housing construction. The competitions carry cash prizes of \$200 and \$100.

The National Institute for Architectural Education announces that the programs for the competitions are ready for distribution to contestants. Copies have been mailed to Architectural Schools and Universities throughout the nation. The competitions are open to students at the college elementary, intermediate and advanced study levels. Any student qualifying for one of the three grades, whether registered in a school or working independently, may obtain a copy of the program for which he qualifies by applying to the National Institute for Architectural Education, 115 East 40th Street, New York 16, N.Y. The solution must be completed in six consecutive weeks prior to April 30, 1958.

VISITING ARCHITECTS

New York City was recently host to the Milanese Architect Gio Ponti. Signor Ponti has influenced the shape of everything from forks to skyscrapers. He is publisher of the decorating magazine *Domus*. His design concept embodies the principal that first an object must be absolutely different, then made functional and finally refined and made beautiful. Gio Ponti's presence in New York points up to a failure in the Chapter's hospitality and public relations potentialities. The Visitor's Committee cannot function unless it is aware of pending visits to this City by Architects—whether foreign or domestic. Signor Ponti's visit was entirely unknown to the New York Chapter office. It behooves all members to notify the Chapter office of any known pending visits to this City by other Architects or professionals connected with Architecture.

CENTENNIAL RECORD

The Chapter office has recently received a complimentary copy of the Centennial record, "A New Century Beckons." This LP recording contains the edited speeches of a number of the distinguished guests who appeared on the A.I.A. Centennial Celebration Program. The individual speeches are introduced by a running commentary. This recording may now be purchased from A.I.A. Headquarters, Washington, D.C. The NY Chapter's copy is available for loan by individuals for short periods of time. Contact the chapter office if interested in hearing the Centennial Record prior to purchasing one's own personal copy.

THIS IS OUR CITY

The sidewalks of New York now total more than 6000 miles—twice the distance from New York to San Francisco. Mapped streets absorb over 27 per cent of the City's gross land area. Manhattan has the highest percentage (almost 40 per cent) of its normally developed area in these streets. Street mileage by boroughs range from a high of 2,400 miles for Queens to Manhattan's low of 503 miles. 84 of these miles are in parkways. New York City maintains 34,246 acres of park lands including over 9,000 acres of boating, bathing and fishing facilities. This park acreage represents more than 10% of the total area of New York City and is well above the average park area of other cities throughout the country. Park facilities have increased 6 fold in the past 24 years. They include over 17 miles of beaches in 8 different locations, 725 playgrounds, 17 swimming pools, 10 golf courses, 463 tennis courts and 6 boat basins. There are over 500 monuments and memorials. These facts on our City were recently uncovered by studies by the Department of City Planning and the Park Department.

PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

The Chapter's public relations program has officially started, even though we are still about \$5,000 short of the \$20,000 needed for this new activity. A slim budget means cutting out some worthwhile activities, and cutting back others. In short, both your Executive and your Public Relations committees believed, and still believe, that \$20,000 is required to do a rounded job. If you have been waiting for the start of the fiscal year to make a contribution—please send your check to the Chapter office today! If you've been meaning to contribute but still haven't—send that check today!

The following additional members have contributed to the Public Relations Fund Raising Drive as of December 10, 1957 through January 6, 1958. (Names of firms and individuals who have contributed prior to this were listed in the January *Oculus*.)

ARTHUR O. ANGILLY
LaPIERRE, LITCHFIELD & PARTNERS
PEREIRA & LUCKMAN
WAYNE A. SOVERNS
ROGER G. SPROSS
KENNETH M. YOUNG

NEW BOOKS

Gallery of Pencil Techniques
by Ernest W. Watson
Reinhold

Modern School Shop Planning
Prakken Publications

Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910
The First Golden Age
by Gran Carpenter Manson
Reinhold

Recreation Places
by Wayne R. Williams
Reinhold

CANDIDATES

Information regarding the qualifications of the following candidates for membership will be considered confidential by the Admissions Committee.

Corporate Membership

JACK PICKENS COBLE	LOUIS V. VIOLA
JACK FREIDIN	JOHN ALFRED WAHL
FREDERICK HENRY REUTER	

Associate Membership

EGIDIO ALUFFI	Sponsors: Louis Bubeck Benjamin Goodrich
ANTHONY FRANCIS BELL	Sponsors: John J. McNamara Herbert Gracer
DOUGLAS B. BARKER	Sponsors: Charles F. Mink Lawrence Lieberfield
EMIL J. CHECCHI	Sponsors: Frederick G. Frost, Jr. N. N. Culin

NEW MEMBERS

The New York Chapter extends its welcome to the following new members:

Corporate

PAUL H. BAREN
HERMAN NEUMANN
WILLIAM B. NORTH
JOHN A. SIDOLI
H. BOURKE WEIGEL

Associate

HERMAN J. BOEHM
JOHN CARRIS
ANTHONY R. FILAZZOLA
PETER KEUMPEL
SEBASTIAN L. LaBELLA

In addition Joseph C. Hazen, Jr. and Leo S. Wou have changed from Associate to Corporate members.

NECROLOGY

Walter P. McQuade died in New York City on December 23rd. A member of the American Institute of Architects, Mr. McQuade was 68 years old. He had retired from active independent practice in 1949. As chief Architect for the Port of New York Authority, Walter P. McQuade designed many prominent buildings in New York City. He was editor of the magazine *The Architect* in the 1920's and had served as a consultant to the Rising & Nelson Slate Company and the Johns-Manville Corporation.

John Knox Shear, architect and editor of *The Architectural Record*, died at Princeton on January 10 at the age of 40. Educated at Carnegie Institute of Technology and Princeton University, he served his architectural apprenticeship in the Pittsburgh area before and after his wartime service in the USNR. For seven years he taught architecture at the above institutions and headed the department of architecture at Carnegie. During this period he was also actively engaged in the practice of architecture through the firm of Shear, Spagnuolo & Taylor of Pittsburgh.